PLANET
COMICS
NO. 40
JAN.
10¢
MYSTA of the MOON
in "CHAMELEON MEN
FROM GALAXY 9"
also GALE ALLEN Lost World
and other fine features

DEATH MASTERS of the VOID

By

MONTAGUE TRUEX

SLOWLY the blackness lifted from his brain and Aran returned to consciousness. In a daze, he realized he was lying on the floor of the *Rocket*. What had happened?

His last memory was of strapping on his plasticase oxygen mask and turning over the ship's controls to Frank Connor, his co-pilot. His call to the rocket-master for more power had gone unanswered, and he was going back to investigate. It was at that moment the blackness struck.

He climbed to his feet and turned quickly. Connor was sitting at the controls. Aran moved to where he could face the man and, seeing the frozen agony on Connor's face, he realized suddenly that never again would the co-pilot move.

In frantic haste, Aran turned and started toward the passenger compartment. There were four doctors and two nurses on the *Rocket*, people who were needed at the spaceport on Ganymede. They were a precious cargo. They were needed at the stricken port to halt a deadly plague of Taman Fever.

Once again fingers of fear clutched his heart. Five of his six passengers were sitting upright as Frank Connor had been, their faces horror-masks of death. The sixth passenger, Doctor Carlos, a late volunteer for the race to Ganymede, was missing.

Without pausing, Aran dashed into the rocket room. A scene of violent chaos greeted his eyes. The rocket-master and his black gang were sprawled on the deck in all parts of the room, their bodies burned and blackened by some great blast or ray of fire.

Sickened by the sight, Aran turned to leave the room.

"Stand where you are!" a voice rasped behind him. He whipped about, startled.

"Doctor Carlos!"

Sudden realization of what this man was doing came to Aran. There was radium in the *Rocket's* hold, a great shipment that was needed on Ganymede to treat the fever victims. Carlos wanted the riches the shipment represented. Aran knew that the only thing which had saved him from death was the plasticase mask he wore. It was plain that Carlos had used some kind of gas on the others.

Carlos ordered him to take over the ship's controls and set a new course, a course that would take them off all charted space lanes.

Time lost all meaning. They could have been speeding through the void for minutes or hours. His anger blinded him to all but the desire to seek vengeance for the murder of the *Rocket's* human cargo. He did not see the strange world growing in the distance until Carlos pointed to it. He centered his attention on the ship's viziplate then, watched a weird city of steel spires and globes grow as they approached.

The city was a forest of spun and curved metal, symmetrical and modern. The inhabitants who moved about on the streets were almost human, compared to some forms of life he had seen in visits to the various planets of the Universe. They were human; in fact, well formed, intelligent looking, and with the exception of huge multicolored wings sprouting from their backs and the deep golden hue of their skin, they could have walked among the people of Earth without causing excitement. They reminded Aran of huge butterflies with bodies of men and women. The males were tall and straight, proud and strong, with lines of cruelty about their eyes. The women, he noted with surprise, were appealingly small and delicate, and, without exception, lovely.

Carlos prodded his back with the ray-gun and Aran moved forward. They left the spaceport and headed for the entrance to a great, shining globe.

They were walking through a huge chamber when Aran heard screams, followed by a harsh shouting. Carlos prodded him ahead once more. They

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NEXT ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS (No. 41, MARCH) ON SALE AT YOUR NEWSSTAND JAN. 10th.

The LOST WORLD

By THORNECLIFFE HERRICK

THEY WERE PENNED INTO A TRAP! OUTSIDE WAITED THE MONSTROUS VOLTA MEN. SEEKING ESCAPE, THEY FLED BLINDLY INTO ROTTING CAVERNS THAT WERE ONCE NEW YORK'S PROUD SUBWAY— BUT INSIDE LAY TERROR FAR WORSE THAN THE VOLTANS!

L. Ronda

WHILE ON THE HUNT FOR A STAG.

VOLTA PATROL! QUICK, INTO HIDING.

HURRY, BONNIE! CENTRAL PARK'S A LOT SAFER THAN THE VOLTANS.

AS ROCKO-CHUTING FROM ABOVE.

ARGH! EARTHLINGS BELOW FINE CATCH WILL BE!

SOME BLOCKS AWAY THE SHIP LANDS.

ADVANCE UNIT—EARTHLINGS WILL HEAD OFF. WE FROM CENTRAL PARK CLOSE IN, STUPID HUMANS TRAP!

AS

ROBIN, YOU AND BONNIE KEEP DOWN IN THAT CAVE. LYSSA AND I WILL HEAD THEM OFF THROUGH THE PARK.

GOOD LUCK!

HUNT, I'M AFRAID!

HURRY. IF WE CAN GET THROUGH THE TIGER GROVE WE'LL BE SAFE. THEY WON'T DARE FOLLOW US THERE.

FORWARD WE TIGERS FEAR NOT. RADO—BLAST BEASTS KILL. FAN OUT AND EARTHLINGS CAPTURE.

THEY OURS WILL BE UNLESS WILD BEASTS THEM DESTROY BEFORE US.

THEY'RE COMING IN. WE'LL HIDE HERE UNTIL THE PATROL PASSES.

SAFE FOR A MOMENT. OH! LOOK!

KILLER CAT! GET OUT OF THE WAY, LYSSA. I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!

HE'S HEADING FOR ME!

ROLL OVER, QUICK, LYSSA! I ALMOST HAVE HIM!

JUST IN TIME. A MOMENT MORE AND HE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN LYSSA. TAKE THIS IN YOUR GULLET, BRUTE!

THEY USED TO CALL THAT COLUMBUS CIRCLE. HOPE WE CAN MAKE IT!

WE'RE ALMOST OUT NOW, THANK GOODNESS. IF WE CAN ONLY GET TO THAT OPEN SPACE AHEAD.

BUT-

WE DIDN'T SHAKE THEM. THE PATROL'S RIGHT BEHIND US.

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO GO!

WE'VE GOT TO JUMP WE MAY HAVE A CHANCE IN THE SUBWAYS!

I CAN'T, HUNT. IT LOOKS TOO HORRIBLE DOWN THERE!

AS VOLTA BLASTS STRIKE ALL AROUND...

IF THEY FOLLOW US HERE, WE'RE SUNK!

LOOKS BAD ANY WAY.

ARGH! THEY INTO SLIME REGIONS GO. WE FOLLOW NOT.

EVEN RAY BLASTS NO PROTECTION BE IN UNDERGROUND. BUT OUR LEADER ANGRY WILL BE THAT EARTH—LINGS ESCAPE.

WE THEM WILL SEAL IN WATERY TOMB. RAY-BLASTS ON COLUMN TRAIN. SHATTERED STONE SUBWAY EXIT WILL BLOCK!

WE IN EFFECT QUARRY KILL. PERHAPS PATROL LEADER US WILL REWARD.

AS—

THE RATS! THEY SHOT UP COLUMBUS MONUMENT AND BLOCKED THE EXIT!

THEY'RE TOO YELLOW TO COME AFTER US THEMSELVES.

WELL I GUESS THE ONLY THING TO DO IS TO PUSH FORWARD.

IT IS SO GLOOMY AND STRANGE DOWN HERE. WHAT CAN LIE AHEAD IN THESE AWFUL DEPTHS?

WHAT INDEED? FOR THE EARTH'S SURFACE HOLDS NO SUCH CREATURES AS THESE!

AS THE WATER FLOWS DEEPER—

THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE, UNLESS WE CAN MAKE A RAFT OUT OF THESE REEDS

THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT SOMEWHERE!

THESE LILY ROOTS ARE AS TOUGH AND FLEXIBLE AS ROPE...LISTEN! I THOUGHT I HEARD A SPLASH UP AHEAD. HUNT, DO YOU THINK SOMETHING—SOMEONE—

JUST IMAGINATION LYSSA. THE VOLTANS FEAR THE SUBWAYS LIKE DEATH, AND NO CREATURE COULD SURVIVE THIS SLIME. COME ON.

I CAN'T HELP IT, HUNT. I HAVE A HORRIBLE FEELING WE'RE BEING WATCHED!

THE DARKNESS IS GETTING ON YOUR NERVES. WAIT! A SPLASH! WHAT THE—?

SUDDENLY.

GOOD HEAVENS—LOOK!

HUNT WHAT ARE THEY?

I DON'T KNOW BUT WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!

OH! WHAT REPULSIVE CREATURES. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

BUT—

TRAPPED! THE NET HOLDS!

INSTANTLY—

PULL ASHORE. QUICK! ONE TWO!

WE'RE CAUGHT LYSSA. MY KNIFE WON'T CUT THESE MESHES!

AT TADMEN HEAD-QUARTERS—

42 ST STATION

HAIL, O CHIEF! WE BRING TWO EARTHLINGS OF LATER DAY SPECIES. SHALL WE EXECUTE THEM? THEY HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE THAT WE CAN USE. WITNESS THE MAN'S WEAPON!

TRUE THEY BE NOT SKILLED AS OUR CAPTIVE SCIENTIST, THEREFORE KILL THEM.

WAIT, SIRE. THEY MAY HAVE THEIR USES. THE VOLTANS WOULD PAY WELL FOR THESE PRISONERS.

THE CHIEF AGREES AND WHILE HE ORDERS A MESSENGER TO THE OUTER WORLD—

THIS WILL GIVE US TIME. I'VE GOT THE NET AND WHEN I SIGNAL— RUN FOR IT!

ANOTHER WORD, O CHIEF. BEFORE THE VOLTAN EMISSARIES ARRIVE, THE TADMEN SHOULD HAVE A RENEWAL OF THE VIBRO CURRENT IN CASE OF VOLTA TREACHERY.

THEN—

AGREED! YOUR COUNCIL IS GOOD, EARTHMEN. GIVE US A NEW CHARGE OF STRENGTH!

LONG HAVE I WAITED FOR THIS DAY OF VENGEANCE. I SHALL DIE WITH MY FOUL CAPTORS BUT THAT BOY AND GIRL WILL ESCAPE— AND LIVE!

LATER...

NO, VOLTAN! WE OF THE UNDERGROUND HAVE CAPTURED TWO EARTHLINGS. FOR A PRICE THEY WILL BE YOURS.

SPEAK, WATER CREATURE, WHERE CAN WE UNDERGROUND ENTRANCE FIND?

ONE ENTRANCE STANDS INTACT BY THE STREET ONCE CALLED 96. BUT FIRST YOU MUST GIVE REWARD FOR MY CHIEF-

SO BE IT. THIS VOLTAN REWARD BE

HELP! OHH-

AS THE PATROL STREAKS FOR 96 ST.

AS THE EARTH QUAKES.

GET INTO THAT CAR YOU TWO. THERE'S A CHANCE THE CURRENT WILL CHARGE THE RAIL. GO! I WILL DIE HERE. MY DAYS ARE ENDED BUT YOU MUST LIVE.

WE'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR US, PROFESSOR.

MEANWHILE-

HUNT, LOOK! THESE CREATURES HAVE ALL TURNED TO JELLY!

QUICK, THE SCIENTIST HAS OVER CHARGED THE VIBRO-CURRENT MACHINES! HE'S WIPED OUT THE SWAMP MEN BUT THE WHOLE PLACE IS SHAKING. NOW'S OUR CHANCE!

COME ON! THE PLACE IS COMING DOWN. HOPE THE PROFESSOR'S RIGHT ABOUT THE RAIL CHARGING.

OH! WE'LL BE CRUSHED!

THAT RAIL HAS GOT TO CHARGE- IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE OF GETTING OUT!

AS THE CEILING CRASHES DOWN-

SUDDENLY-

HUNT! A VOLTA PATROL! LOOK, THEY'RE AIMING AT US- THEY'LL BLOW THIS CAR TO PIECES!

YOU KEEP IT GOING- I HAVE A PLAN!

IF THIS SWITCH STILL WORKS I CAN TURN THE CAR DOWN THE OTHER TRACK- THAT WAY WE CAN WIPE OUT THE WHOLE PATROL.

THE CAR'S MOVING! THE RAIL CHARGED- WE'RE SAVED!

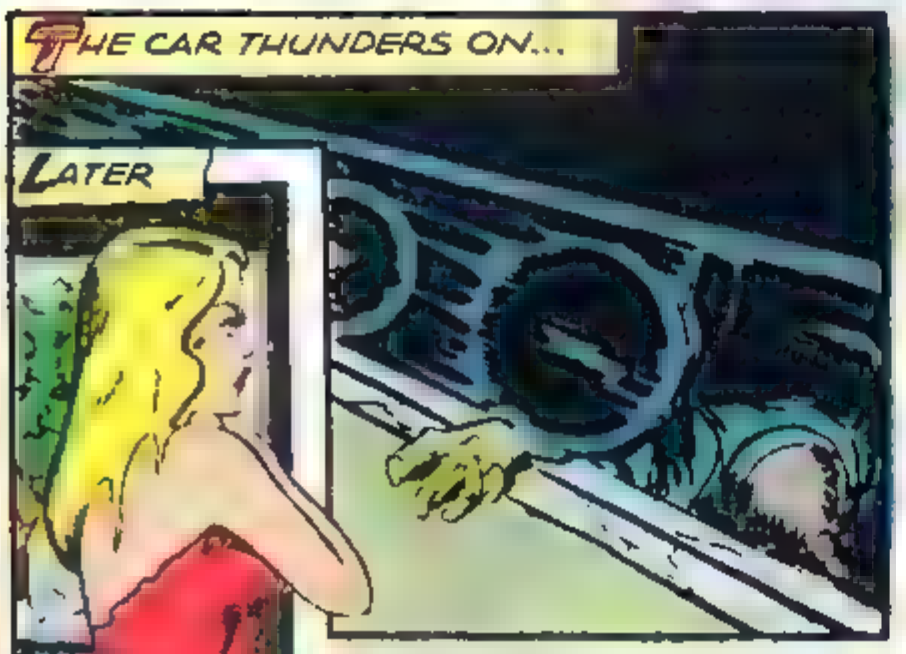
AS THE CAR HURTLES BY...

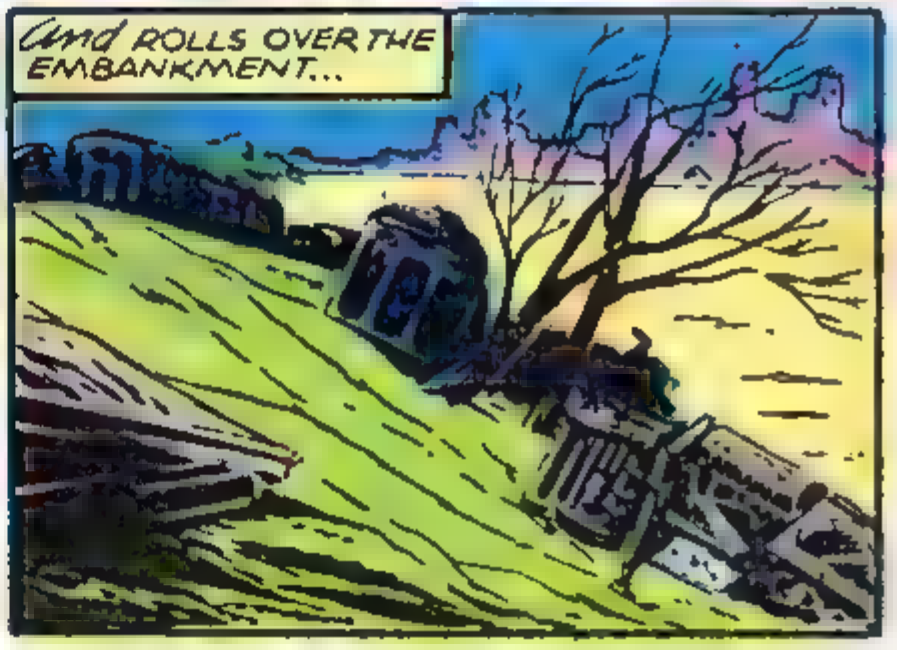
SWITCH IS RUSTY! BUT IT'S GOT TO MOVE- IT MUST!

AS DOWN THE TRACK...
EARTHLINGS IN CAR BE THE BLAST AS CAR BY INTERSECTION PASSES.

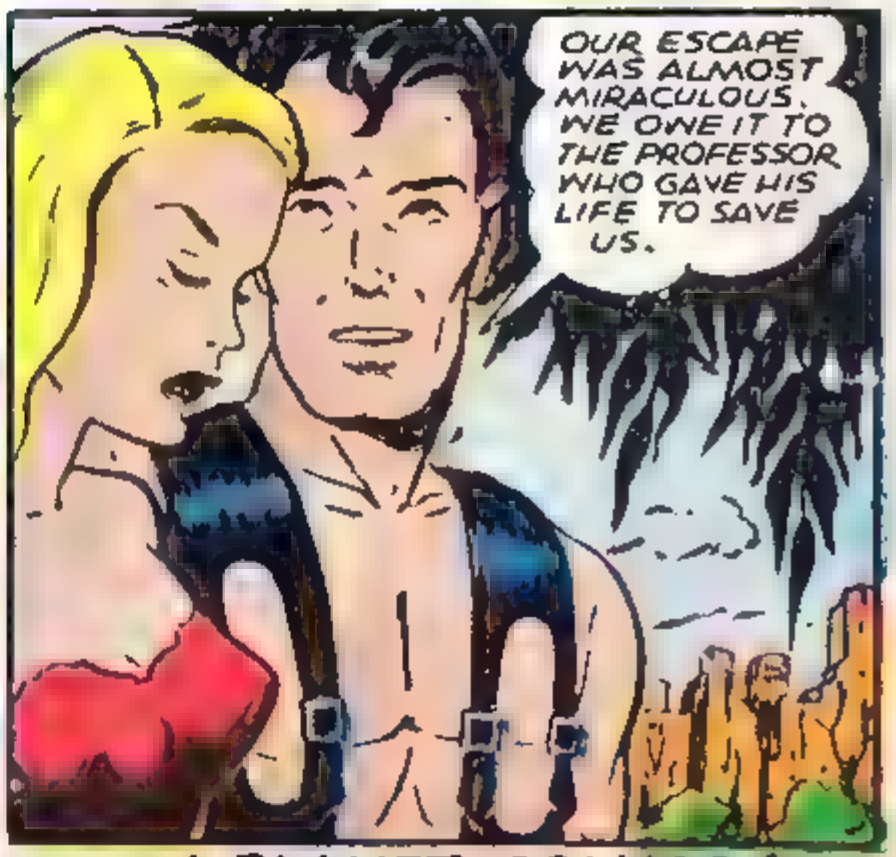
BUT...
THE OLD SWITCH WORKED! THE CAR'S HEADING FOR THE VOLTA PATROL!
ARGH! CAR DOWN WRONG TRACK COMES.

AIEE! RUN! WHEELS CRUSH US!
EARTHLING IN TRAP US HAS. EMBANKMENT TRY TO CLIMB!


THE CAR THUNDERS ON...
LATER


And ROLLS OVER THE EMBANKMENT...

LYSSA! THE TRAIN ROLLED OVER THE PATROL! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!


OUR ESCAPE WAS ALMOST MIRACULOUS. WE OWE IT TO THE PROFESSOR WHO GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE US.

FLINT BAKER and REEF RYAN
SPACE RANGERS

by HUGH FITZHUGH

SPACE RANGER H Q ON EARTH...

HO-HUM. THIS DESK DUTY IS WEARING ME OUT. WISH SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN.

POP!

SUDDENLY...

REEF! WAKE UP! THE S O S INDICATOR IS JUMPIN' LIKE A SCARED CHICKEN!

AS SEEN THROUGH THE TELIVONATOR...

THE BLUE PERFUME ...IT...

WHY, IT'S_IT'S TED_CALLING FROM THE VENUS STATION! AND_ SOMETHING'S WRONG!

FLINT, HE'S DEAD! WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THIS CASE! TED!_OUR PAL...

RIGHT! BUT WHAT'D HE MEAN BY BLUE PERFUME? SOME NEW KIND OF GAS?

SOON...

BABY_ BRING LUCK TO PAPA_MAYBE I'LL NEED YOU ON THIS TRIP!

DON'T TELL ME YOU BROUGHT THAT LOONEY ANTI-MAGNETIC INVENTION OF YOURS ALONG. GET HEP, BOY_ YOU'RE NO TOM EDISON!

QUIET, SMALL FRY, N' GET READY TO TAKE 'ER DOWN. THE STATION LOOKS DESERTED.

OK_HERE WE GO!

SECONDS LATER...

MIGHT BE A TRAP, REEF_GO EASY.

WH_THE BODY'S GONE!

SO'S THAT BLUE MIST_THE ROOM IS CLEAR!

MAYBE TED LEFT A MESSAGE OR A CLUE SOMEWHERE.

YEAH_ I'LL TAKE A LOOK IN HERE.

BUT SOON...

F...FLINT...THAT BLUE STUFF'S ALL OVER THE PLACE...I CAN'T BREATHE...

REEP_ THE DOOR! LOOK!

AS FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY...

YOU DON'T SEEM TO CARE FOR MY PERFUME, SPACE RANGERS.

THE GAS WORKS SWIFTLY— THEY ARE OVERCOME ALREADY. TAKE THEM TO THE CAVERN ON MY PLANETOID.

LATER.

FLINT— LOOK! IT'S TED— BUT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

THEN, SHUFFLING PAST

WHAT GIVES HERE? AND WHY THOSE BANDS AROUND THEIR HEADS?

HALT! SIT DOWN AND CHAIN YOURSELVES IN!

PSST— REEF! WHY DO THEY OBEY HIM? WHY DON'T THEY OVERPOWER HIM?

SEARCH ME!

BUT—

ALL RIGHT NOW— GET UP!

I GET IT! THE BANDS PUT THEM UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ONE WEARING THE LEADER BAND!

LOOKS AS IF HE'S WALKING IN HIS SLEEP! OH—OH, HERE COMES THE LEADER FOR US NOW!

GOT TO FIGURE A WAY OUT SOMEHOW WAIT MAYBE

GET AWAY!

CEASE RESISTANCE FOOL!

THE BAND MARKS YOU MY SLAVE. GET INTO LINE QUICKLY!

HOPE THIS WORKS!

HOLY HANNAH! MY BODY'S UNDER THEIR CONTROL BUT MY MIND ISN'T. THIS IS HORRIBLE!

FOLLOW ME.

THEY ARE LED INTO AN IMMENSE LAVA-FILLED CAVERN.

A NATURAL LAVA BED!

FILL THESE VATS WITH THE BOILING LAVA THERE ARE YOUR TOOLS. GET TO WORK!

APPEARING SUDDENLY

IDIOT! YOU DO NOT MAKE THEM WORK SWIFTLY ENOUGH! HAVE THEM PULL THE FILLED VATS INTO THE LABORATORY.

MANY HOURS LATER

THE METALLIC GAS MUST BE MADE FROM THIS STUFF BUT WHAT PURPOSE?

FASTER, SLAVES! YOUR SLOWNESS WILL ANGER QUEEN THECA!

FASTER? I'M ABOUT TO DROP NOW. FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN MADE TO [illegible]!

SLOW-WORKING SWINE! FEEL THE PAIN OF MY WHIP!

I CANNOT BROOK YOUR DELAYS... ENOUGH OF THIS GAS YOU ARE MAKING — AND I HOLD THE UNIVERSE IN MY HAND!

WHY SHE'S INHUMAN!

ONNH!

MAKE HASTE — EMPTY THE VATS INTO THE CAULDRON.

THAT DID IT — THE BAND'S LOOSE!

HURLING

GET UP! YOU DELAY MY PLAN!

INSTANTLY

HE IS FREE — STOP HIM!

NOT THIS TIME SISTER!

BUT SWIFTLY...

IMPERTINENT DOG! I'LL TEACH YOU!

WOW! I CAN'T HIT A WOMAN!

SHE-CAT! LOOK OUT—I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!

NOW CAN YOU OPPOSE ME? —OOH!

AAH! THE LAVA! AAAHH!

THEN, AS FLINT TURNS TO FACE THE GUARDS..

WH-WHY—THEY'RE FOLLOWING HER! OF COURSE—SHE CONTROLS THEM!

BUT THEN THE RANGERS...

NO-NO! NOT YOU GUYS! OH, I FORGOT—ONLY ONE WAY TO STOP 'EM!

WHEW! NICE WORK, FLINT—AND I SEE YOU HUNG ONTO YOUR LITTLE TOY THROUGH IT ALL!

NOT ONLY HUNG ONTO IT, BUT BY FLICKING IT'S STUCK IT UNDER MY HEADBAND, MADE IT SHORT OUT THE ELECTRONIC CURRENT, AND—IT DID!

SPACE RANGERS APPEARS IN EVERY PLANET COMICS!

MYSTA OF THE MOON

By ROSS GALLUN

AGAINST SAVAGE FORCES ROAMING THE UNIVERSE STANDS A LOVELY GIRL, SOLE GUARDIAN OF THE GREAT TERRESTRIAL SCIENCE... FOREVER SHE MUST LOOK TO HER FAR-FLUNG DEFENSES. AS ON THIS DAY...

AT LAST! ROBOT HAS INSTALLED MY SUPER-SPATIAL ALARM.. NOW I CAN TURN TO MY OTHER WORK..

YET BELOW ON EARTH...

BOY, MAIL THIS PACKAGE TO MYSTA! IT WILL BE READY IN AN HOUR-AND I MAY NOT BE HERE!

THINKS HERSELF SAFE NOW, DOES SHE? HA!

TAKE YOUR POSITIONS, FRIEND ANTS!

MINUTES LATER...

THIS WOULD BE A GREAT RISK -REDUCING MYSELF TO ANT-SIZE- IF MYSTA DID NOT ALSO HAVE A BID-COMPRESSOR!

IT WAS A MISTAKE TO BAR ME, DR. BLACK, FROM THE SCIENCE COUNCIL! WHAT A PITY MYSTA IS THE ONLY ONE LEFT ALIVE TO REGRET IT!

GREETINGS, FRIEND ANTS! YOU SEE, I KEEP MY WORD- SOON YOU AND I WILL HAVE IN OUR GRASP THE TREASURE THAT MOON-BRAT HOLDS!

AN HOUR LATER

WHAT? OH, IT'S ONLY MAIL FROM EARTH

WHY, HOW THOUGHTFUL! DR BLACK HAS SENT ME SOME ANT SPECIMENS.

BUT, ON OPENING THE PACKAGE-

OH! THEY'RE ALIVE - RUNNING EVERY WHICH WAY! HOW CAN I CATCH THEM?

TST - TST!

JUST AS I THOUGHT! HER ATTENTION IS COMPLETELY DISTRACTED

OF ALL THE SILLY STUNT - LIVE SPECIMENS! NOW THEY'VE ALL DISAPPEARED!

NOT QUITE! IF MYSTA WERE TO LOOK CLOSELY AT HER ROBOT'S LEFT EYE -

THE ONLY WAY IN!

INSIDE THE ROBOT'S BRAIN!

NOW I CANNOT LOSE!

THEN

ROBOT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

ROBOT! ROBOT! I'M NOT CONTROLLING HIM! THEN WHO IS? MY SECRET HIDEOUT_ IF ONLY I CAN GET THERE!

3 SECONDS LATER

NOW! TO CATCH MY BREATH AND FIGURE THIS OUT... AH, A PLAN! ROBOT CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE REAL ME AND MY THOUGHT IMAGE...HERE GOES!

LOOKING FOR ME, ROBOT?

KILL ROBOT, KILL!

IT WORKED! NOW TO PEEK AT MY LAB...WHOEVER'S BEHIND ALL THIS OUGHT TO FEEL SAFE IN SHOWING UP NOW_

FUNNY! NOT A THING... ROBOT STILL, NOTHING STIRRING AT_ BUT WAIT! WHAT'S THAT?

... COMING OUT OF MY BIO-COMPRESSOR!

COME, FRIEND ANTS- THROW THE ROBOT DOWN THAT SCRAP CHUTE AND LET US GET TO WORK! FIRST, TO BUILD A SPACE SHIP TO START OUR CONQUEST OF EARTH!

THIS GOES TOO FAR! I MUST REACH ROBOT AND, THROUGH HIM, RETRIEVE MY GUN... THAT'S THE **FIRST** STEP!

BUT-

OH! HOW DID IT GET HERE?

K-K-K-K!

AND BEFORE MYSTA CAN ACT..

TOO FAST FOR ME! UGH, HOW HORRID!

..IT CARRIES HER TO DR. BLACK!

WHAT? ANOTHER MYSTA? OH, I SEE — HA, HA, A VERY CLEVER ILLUSION!

WELL, ILLUSIONS WON'T SAVE YOU! THIS TIME YOU REALLY DIE.. BUT WHAT IS THAT PRETTY LITTLE BAUBLE FOR?

A CHANCE! A CHANCE!

THE HYPNOSIS DISC HAS GOT HIM!

DR. BLACK, COMMAND THE ANT TO RELEASE ME!

Y-YES, MISTRESS.

DROP THE GIRL, THARKA!

K-K-K-K!

YOU REFUSE? THEN-

DIE, INSOLENT ONE!

BUT, AT THE DEATH OF ONE OF THEM, THE OTHER ANTS ATTACK!

A-A-A-AH! THEY TEAR ME, MISTRESS -HELP!

K-K-K-K!

UGH-FINISHED HIM... AND NOW THEY TURN ON ME! I'LL NEED THE DIS-FACTOR!

THE DIS-FACTOR MEANS-DISINTREGRATION!

DIE-HORRID ONES!

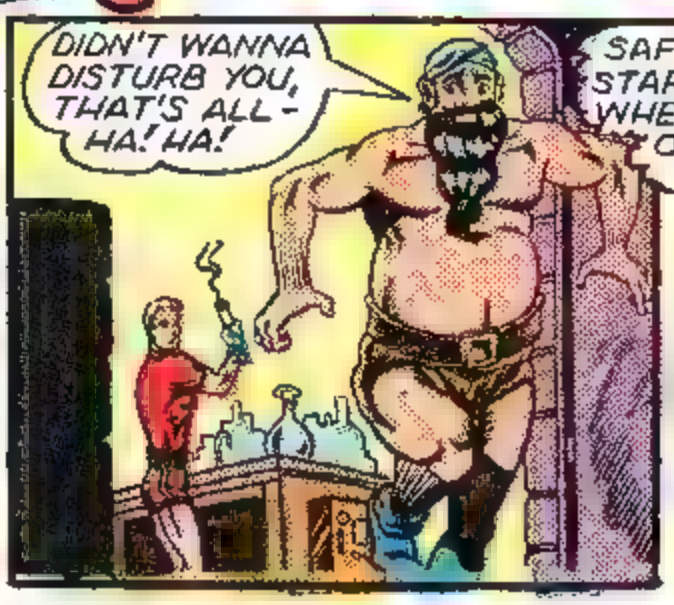
LATER...

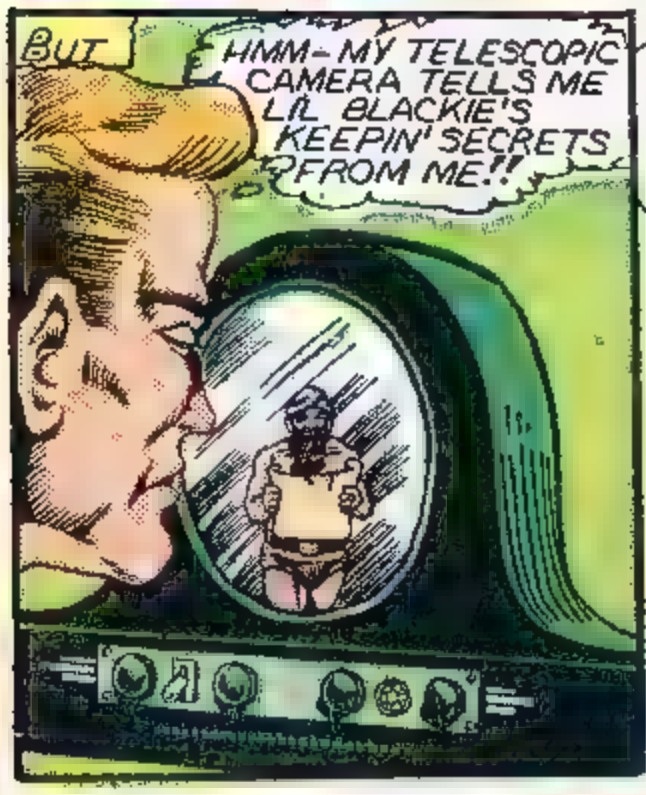
AH, POOR ROBOT! AND POOR MYSTA! WILL THEY NEVER LEAVE US IN PEACE?

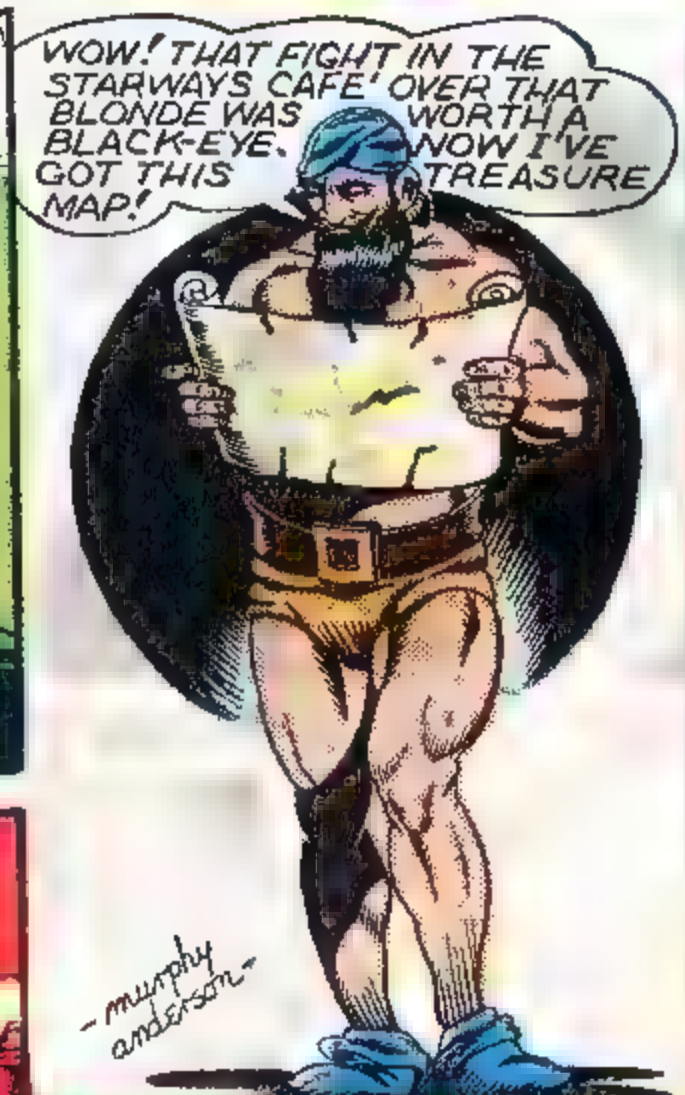
MYSTA APPEARS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

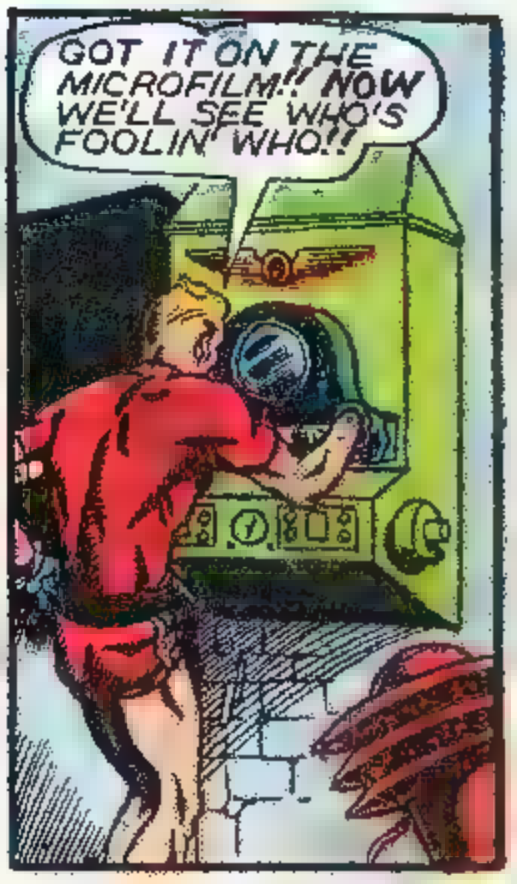
STAR PIRATE

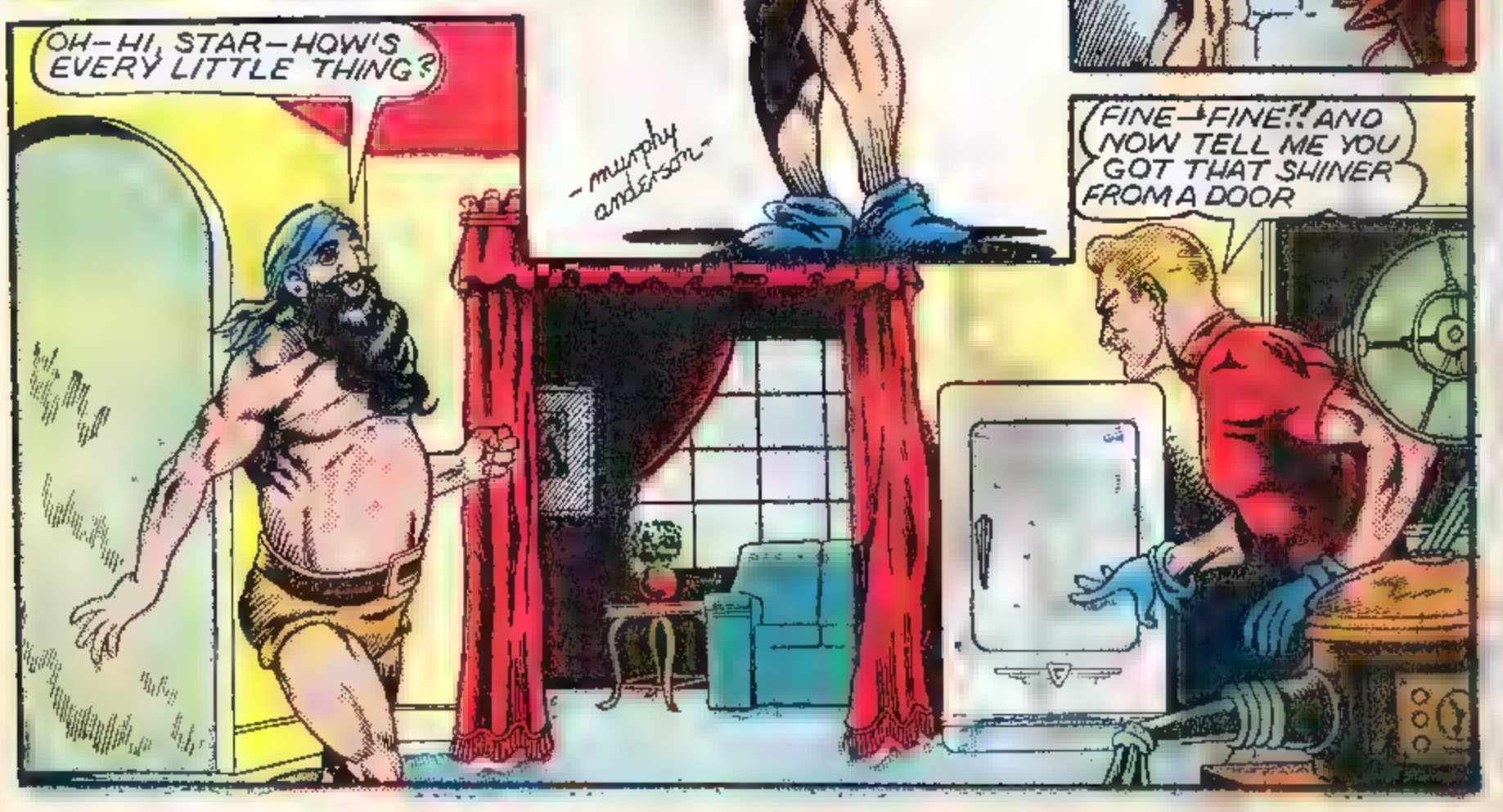
By LEN DODSON











SA-AY, WOULDN'T IT BE SPORT HUNTIN' A BURIED TREASURE? IF YOU HAD A MAP I MEAN? I WAS READIN' A BOOK AND—

IT SOCKED YOU IN THE EYE!! GO ON!"

QUIT RIBBIN'!! NOW JUST S'POSE I DID HAVE A MAP— AN' S'POSE IT'S THE REAL McCOY—

BUT IF YOU HAD A MAP I'D KNOW, WOULDN'T I, OL' PAL??

HAH! HE THINKS I'M NOT ON TO HIM!!

MEANWHILE—IN THE CELLAR OF THE STARWAYS CAFE'

SO YOU SLUGGED A CUSTOMER OVER A BLONDE AND HE GOT OUR MAP!

THALA SURE IS SORE!! WELL, THIS MEANS ONE LESS TO SHARE THE TREASURE OF TAOL!!

IF WE FIND IT! WE AIN'T GOT THE MAP NOW, REMEMBER?

THALA— PLEASE—!!

BEG TILL YOU ROT!! C'MON, BOYS— I REMEMBER MOST OF THE MAP!

YEAH— GOTTA BEAT BLACKBEARD TO IT!!

GOOD JOB WE DID ON THE CREW OF THIS ROCKET

UH-HUH!! NICE FRIENDLY FOLKS AREN'T WE??

KEL, TAKE THE CONTROLS. AT THE THIRD ASTEROID OUT OF JUPITER DROP THIRTY DEGREES AND LAND AFTER THAT WE TRUST TO LUCK —AND MY MEMORY!

THAT NIGHT—

STAR'S KIDDIN' AGAIN!! I'LL SHOW HIM!!

I'M TAKIN' THIS NEW JET TO —ROCKO— SEE HOW HE LIKES THAT!

HO! HO! AM I ENJOYING THIS!! HE'LL BE BACK IN THE MORNING, LOOKING LIKE A LOST PUP!

FOLLOWING THE MAP, BLACKBEARD LANDS ON A LONG-DESERTED STRIP OF OUTER REGION—

THE JOINT'S A WRECK— AND SPOOKY TOO!! UGH— ER— HEY!! VOICES!!!

I'D BETTER HIDE—

YIPE!!

MORNING COMES—BUT BLACKBEARD DOESN'T—

COULD BE THIS MAP IS GOOD?? THEN I'M THE DOPE!!!

MINUTES LATER AT THE ARCHIVES MUSEUM—

WHAT—YOU'VE A MICROFILM COPY OF THE TAOL TREASURE MAP?? MAN, EVEN A COPY IS PRICE-LESS!!!—HELLO—HELLO!! —UH- LINE'S DEAD—

I'LL TEACH BLACK-BEARD TO PUT ONE OVER ON ME!!—AFTER I GET TO THAT TREASURE FIRST!

MEANWHILE THALA AND HER BLACK-GUARDS ARRIVE—

IT'S HERE! I KNOW IT!

YEAH-BUT WHERE?

OUCH! I PICKED AN OLD MINE TO FALL INTO!! OOO-G-GONNA SNEEZE!! NO-

NO-SNEEZE-A-A-A-ACHOO!!

SNOOPER!! HOLD HIM SO'S I CAN SWAT!

IT'S A PLEASURE!

STOP, YOU IDIOTS! HE'S THE GUY WHO HAS OUR MAP!

AHA! ALLUVA SUDDEN SHE'S A CHARMER.. —SHE WANTS THE MAP, AND STAR SAID IT'S A FAKE.. OBOY, WAIT'LL I TELL HIM I SOLD IT FOR A FORTUNE!

BY THIS TIME STAR FINDS THE OLD MINE —

LOOKS LIKE A WAREHOUSE OF TAOL ART . I MUST BE ON THE RIGHT TRACK!

I WONDER WHERE BLACK-BEARD IS??

I WONDER WHERE STAR IS??

UH-OH.. VOICES IN THE SHAFT!

THE MAP'S YOURS—FOR TEN THOUSAND DOLEN!!

BLACKBEARD!! HE THINKS THE MAP'S A PHONEY LIKE I SAID!! UH-OH— HERE COMES TROUBLE—

THE MAP'S OURS—FOR NOTHING! SLUG HIM!

SLUG WHO?

THE MAP'S REAL! HANG ONTO IT!!"

OH— NOW IT'S REAL!! STAR, I'LL BET YOU KNEW ABOUT THAT MAP ALL THE TIME!

OUCH!! STUBBED MY TOE!!

HEY! BANGIN' HIS TOE FOUND THE SECRET LOCK AND OPENED THE VAULT!

LOOK AT 'EM GO FOR IT— BUT NOW I'LL STUB THIS STONE AGAIN AND—

HEY! YOU LOCKED 'EM IN!!—

SURE—AND AFTER THEY KILL EACH OTHER FOR THE TREASURE, IT'S ALL OURS!

Y'KNOW, IT'S BY ACCIDENT I GOT HERE AT ALL—!

BY ACCIDENT YOU GET HALF THE LOOT GHIPE-GHIPE!!

STAR PIRATE IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!!

Gale Allen

BY DOUGLAS McKEE

WHAT NEW TERROR WAS THIS, ERUPTING ALONG THE SPACE LANES? WHO COULD IMAGINE SUCH GHASTLY THINGS?... THAT WAS THE TROUBLE - ALMOST ANYONE COULD!

BOARD GALE'S SHIP, DOC AND PROF ARE WORKING AT THEIR ENDLESS EXPERIMENTS WHEN.

I SAY, PROFESSOR, LOOK AT THIS!

SPACE SHIP.. WRECKED IN SOME STRANGE WAY..! AND DRIFTING AIMLESSLY!

GALE MUST HAVE SEEN IT - WE'RE TURNING!

OF COURSE I SAW IT! ONE OF YOU BOYS TAKE OVER HERE WHILE I BOARD THE DERELICT!

IT'S OUR DUTY TO REPORT IT- AND ALSO DESTROY THE WRECK.

SOON- DESERTED! WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?

SUDDENLY- HA! SO IT WAS YOU! BUT YOU LEFT ONE OF US ALIVE! HA. HA-HA!

EASY NOW, SISTER! YOU'RE A LITTLE MIXED UP!

BUT I'LL KILL YOU! YOU AND YOUR DRAGONS! KILL KILL ..KILL! HA. HA. HA. HA. HA!

GOLLY, YOU'RE IN A BAD WAY! WHAT'S THIS ABOUT DRAGONS?

DRAGONS- YES! YOU SHOULD KNOW! BREATHING FIRE...HUGE CLAWS...HORRIBLE!

THEY CAME RIGHT IN THROUGH THE STEEL WALLS! THEY ATE EVERYBODY- AND THEN **CRUNCHED** THE SHIP IN THEIR JAWS- OH, I CAN'T STAND IT- CAN'T- CAN'T!

Meanwhile - ON A DIM ASTEROID.

HA! MORE INTRUDERS - I'LL GIVE THEM THE SAME TREATMENT!

BUT, ON GALE'S SHIP.

THERE NOW, MY DEAR - JUST RELAX. NO SUCH THING AS DRAGONS... WHATEVER HAPPENED, YOU'RE -

NO SUCH THING AS DRAGONS? THEN WHAT'S THAT! A-A-A-H! NOT AGAIN! NO-NO. NO!

IMPOSSIBLE!

MUST BE A TRICK MECHANISM! A TOUCH OF ANTI-ATOMIC, FULL FORCE WILL SETTLE THAT!

FUNNY - A TOUCH ISN'T ENOUGH! DOC, TRY THE PORT GUN!

THAT DOESN'T WORK, EITHER! IT'S COMING CLOSER!

And then -

STAND BACK, EVERYBODY! GALE, GET THE ACID GUN!

A-A-A-H! DEATH!

HMM! SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT THIS! I **KNOW** DRAGONS DON'T EXIST... AND IF THEY DID THEY **COULDN'T** GO THROUGH STEELINUM LIKE THAT! HMM... I WONDER -

B-BUT - HOW?

The LONE SURVIVOR FLEES SCREAMING. THE TERRIBLE THING SEES GALE AND SWINGS TOWARD HER!

EVEN THE HYPO-ACID WON'T WORK!

THEN- WHAT CAN WE DO?

I THINK I HAVE THE ANSWER!

-THIS! SEE IT RECOILS- FROM MY NEW RAY!

OBSERVE HOW IT DISINTEGRATES!

Y- YES- B- BUT MORE ARE COMING IN!

NO MATTER! MY NEW RAY IS EQUAL TO THEM ALL!

ALL THE REPULSIVE MONSTERS LITERALLY VANISH!

SO- I WAS RIGHT!

BUCK UP CHILD- THE DANGER IS OVER!

NOW- TELL ME WHERE THESE THINGS FIRST ATTACKED YOUR SHIP... WE MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!

MINUTES LATER...

PROF SAID TO SET A COURSE FOR QUADRANT 'G'... WELL, DANGER, HERE WE COME!

WOW! LOOK AT 'EM SWARM! AND IT LOOKS AS IF THEY'RE COMING FROM THAT ASTEROID!

DON'T LET 'EM WORRY YOU, GALE! I CAN TAKE CARE OF THEM, NO MATTER HOW FAST THEY COME! GO AHEAD AND LAND ON THAT ASTEROID!

WITHIN AN HOUR-

WE'RE RIGHT IN THE THICKEST OF IT NOW, FOLKS! CAN'T GET ANY WORSE... JUST KEEP CALM-

CHIN UP KID! WHATEVER PROF IS USING IT'S TAKING CARE OF THOSE THINGS!

HOPE HE DOESN'T RUN OUT OF POWDER!

and then-

LOOK OUT, PROF- SOMETHING NEW!

GOOD! OUT OF THAT CAVE, EH? WHOEVER'S BEHIND THIS GAVE HIMSELF AWAY THAT TIME!

UNDAUNTED, ALONE, THE PROFESSOR FACES A FURIOUS CHARGE!

and EVEN THEY-

SEE? ALL GONE! NOW FOLLOW ME!

A SHORT TUNNEL - AND THEN -

THERE'S OUR MAN! THOUGHT WE'D FIND A SET-UP LIKE THIS!

WHAT IN PLUTO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

TRYING TO BREAK INTO MY PLATINOL MINING STAKE, HEY? TRYING TO OUT - GUESS MY THOUGHT MACHINE, HEY? WELL, HAVE SOME **REAL** DEATH!

NO, NO, GALE! NOT AT HIM - AT THE MACHINE! NEVER MIND HIS BLASTER - **DE-STROY THE MACHINE!**

I DESTROYED IT! BUT - BUT - WHAT BECAME OF HIS GUN? AND WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT A THOUGHT MACHINE?

I SURRENDER - DON'T KILL ME - I SURRENDER - DON'T KILL ME!

GALE, **THAT** WAS A THOUGHT MACHINE! ... IT CAST IMAGES IN FOLKS' MINDS ... MADE 'EM SEE DRAGONS ... AND GUNS - BUT THE WORST OF IT WAS - IF FOLKS **BELIEVED** WHAT THEY SAW - THOSE THINGS BECAME REAL! THOSE DRAGONS DESTROYED THE OTHER SHIP - AND HIS GUN COULD HAVE KILLED YOU ... BECAUSE THEY WERE **BELIEVED!**

BUT - HOW DID YOU -?

I'D HEARD OF WORK ALONG THIS LINE ... I SUSPECTED, IN TIME TO SAVE US ... MY RAY? HO-HO! THAT WAS A FLUOROSCOPE ... COULDN'T HARM A GIANT! HO-HO! **BUT** - YOU BELIEVED IN IT! THAT'S WHY IT **SEEMED** TO WORK!

Gale Allen appears regularly in **PLANET COMICS!!**

BARGAIN-HUNTING? TRY UNITED STATES WAR BONDS!

reached the end of the chamber and walked through another door. Aran saw the cause of the disturbance then.

A tiny butterfly woman lay on the floor, sobbing and beaten; long, golden hair falling in disarray over her soft shoulders. Standing above her, wielding a long wire whip, was a giant butterfly man dressed in a suit of spun gold, muscles rippling in his powerful body, and expression of cruel enjoyment on his ugly face.

With one hand Aran caught the wrist of the huge yellow man. Almost in the same motion, he brought up his right fist in a sweeping blow that struck the man's chin and sent him staggering back. He was about to follow through with a rain of punches when a blow sent daggers of pain stabbing through his brain, and then he knew only darkness. . . .

Slowly Aran's mind fought its way back to consciousness. He was lying on a smooth, cool floor. He lifted his head and looked around him.

He was in the center of a huge auditorium. All about him were the butterfly people. Directly before him, seated upon a throne, was the man in yellow he had attacked. On the floor before the throne was the lovely, blonde girl Aran had sought to save. She was staring at him curiously. To the right of the man in yellow was Carlos, the renegade doctor. His skin was white. He looked much like an Earthman. But two great wings sprouted from his back. Aran realized that the man had folded his wings and kept them covered by the Earth suit he wore when travelling on the *Rocket*.

"So, Earthman! You have awakened." The voice was that of the yellow clad ruler.

"What do you want of me?" Aran demanded.

"Information, Earthman. Information about the next shipment of radium from Earth."

Aran shook his head. Any radium leaving Earth must reach the port on Ganymede. Even if it cost his life, he would not speak.

The ruler made a motion with his hand. The man holding Aran tightened his grip. The other man leveled a ray-gun, pressed the trigger. A lance of searing flame cut across Aran's leg.

The girl before the throne grabbed the ruler's arm, her lovely face twisted in horror, and begged him to halt the torture. The ruler brought up his arm and smashed the girl across the face, throwing her backward. Then the whip of flame lashed Aran again. Once more he found himself slipping into a land of shadows. . . .

Aran felt a cool hand stroking his forehead. He opened his eyes. Through the shadows he could see the blurred outline of the girl.

She pressed a ray-gun into his hand. He climbed to his feet and followed her into a long, dark corridor.

They moved in silence. As the clouds left his mind, Aran realized the girl had come to aid him.

In the passageway behind them, Aran heard the pounding of running feet, shouting voices. "Hurry!" the girl whispered urgently.

They burst into a large, bright room. The girl stopped short, gasped. Coming toward them, weapons leveled, was Carlos. Behind him a guard!

Aran snapped up his gun. He pressed the trigger savagely. The ray caught Carlos in the stomach, dropped him in his tracks. The guard turned to escape, but the deady ray struck between his shoulder blades, throwing him forward. The girl snapped into action again, sped across the room, into a second passage. Aran followed, still silent.

After long moments, they came to the metal door of a great hangar. Aran shouted in triumph. There was the *Rocket*, standing on a launching platform, ready to take off. Aran opened its sliding door, motioned to the girl to enter. She shook her head.

"I would not be able to live in your world, Earthman," she said, reaching behind her to touch her wings. "You must go alone."

The sounds of pursuit drew near. In a moment hundreds of men would burst into the hangar. "But they will kill you!"

"I am the mate of the ruler," she said. "They will not touch me."

He closed his arms about her. "Why did you help me?" he asked softly.

The girl sighed. "Always, when I have watched the cruelty of our men to their mates, I have dreamed of a man who would be gentle and gallant. Always, since the beginning of time it seems, I have waited for someone like you. And then you came, like a dream unfolding before me. I could not let you die." She pushed away from him. "Farewell, Earthman."

Climbing into the *Rocket*, he set the viziplate so that he could see into the hangar he had just left. He saw the charging butterfly men, the ruler in the lead. He saw the girl, ray-gun pointing at the drums of fuel that lined the hangar. He saw her press the trigger . . . and then the scene on the viziplate was nothing but a sheet of fire.

A great sadness filled Aran as he set his course for Ganymede. He would think of the girl many times in the future, remember the feeling that had made her sacrifice her life to save his. He almost wished that it had been he who had died in the flames. . . . But the shipment of radium in the *Rocket's* hold. He must get it through.

The B/G OF THE COMICS!

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LOOK FOR THE BULL'S-EYE.....

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